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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2459

May 4, 1990

ANTI-APHID RESEARCH -- USDA scientists have found at least nine breeding lines of barley that aren't destroyed by the Russian wheat aphid. "Some lines thrived despite heavy feeding by aphids," says USDA Entomologist James A. Webster. Webster said at least one major brewing company is using the lines to try to develop new varieties of malting barley that can be grown without using insecticide. The Russian wheat aphid, which also attacks wheat, rye & forage plants, has caused more than \$240 million in damage & control costs in the U.S. since it was first spotted in the U.S. in 1986. Contact for anti-aphid research progress: Robert L. Burton (405) 624-4126.

SCHOOL BREAKFAST GRANTS -- USDA has awarded \$3 million to school districts in 16 states to help start school breakfast programs. The grants are part of a five-year program to provide start-up funds for new breakfast programs, says Betty Jo Nelsen, administrator of USDA's Food & Nutrition Service. "We know a good breakfast contributes to good nutrition, and we know kids who are well nourished have the energy they need to learn, work and play through a long school day." The 16 states are: Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Virginia. Contact: Phil Shanholtzer (703) 756-3286.

AMERICAN FARMERS have an unprecedented opportunity to gain a larger market share in a growing world market for ag products, and the biggest obstacles are "policies which lead to unfair trade conditions in world markets," says Sec. of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter. That's why ag trade reform through the GATT Uruguay Round negotiations is so important to U.S. farmers, Yeutter says. No citizens anywhere in the world should sit idly by & continue to pay the excessive costs of outdated ag trade barriers & outmoded production policies. Every nation can -- and should -- do better, Yeutter says.

"The high risk path for U.S. agriculture in today's world is to not seek trade liberalization ... the most likely alternative to a successful GATT Round will be mounting pressure to erect more protectionist barriers in agriculture," Yeutter says. "This has to stop, and the Uruguay Round is our best shot at putting on the brakes." Contact: Kelly Shipp (202) 447-4623.

MORMON CRICKET MICROBE -- USDA scientists are releasing a one-celled microbe that infects & kills Mormon crickets in Idaho field tests as part of a stepped-up war on these plant-eating insects in the West. "We hope this microbe will stop the cricket's occasional population explosions," says USDA's Jerome A. Onsager. The microbe may eliminate costly insecticide spraying, he says. It can kill up to 90 percent of Mormon crickets without harming other insects. Contact: Jerry A. Onsager (406) 994-3344.

COMPLEX CARBS -- Americans over the age of two should increase their intake of starches and other complex carbohydrates, says the National Academy of Sciences. They can do this by eating a combination of breads, cereals and legumes. Complex carbohydrates, says Louisiana Nutritionist Beth Reames, consist both of starches & fibers, which are found in plants & enter our food supply as grain products, cereals, fruits & vegetables. Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-4141.

A HANDY NEW "Desk Reference Guide to U.S. Agricultural Trade" is available free from USDA-FAS Info, 5922-S, Washington, D.C. 20250. Phone: (202) 447-7937.

LAWN -- FRIEND OR FOE? Many homeowners see a lawn only as a chore -- to fertilize is to have to mow more often. "There are some drawbacks to having a healthy, vigorously growing lawn," says Louisiana Horticulturist Tom Koske, "but there are some very positive trade-offs too." Koske has some simple guides for establishing & maintaining a healthy lawn. Contact: Thomas Koske (504) 388-4141.



NAFB TRIP TO POLAND -- Ed Slusarczyk, (Ag Radio Network, Utica, N.Y.) (left) and Lynn Ketelsen (Linder Farm Network, Willmar, Minn.), recently met with Lech Walensa while they were in Poland. Slusarczyk and Ketelsen were in Poland to talk with ag officials, tour farms & shipping ports & planning for NAFB's trip to Poland this coming Fall.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1717 -- Here's some practical "do's" and "don'ts" for home gardeners. Patrick O'Leary talks to University of Maryland extension specialists about starting a garden, planting shrubs & ornamentals, as well as caring for your lawn or groundcover. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 min. documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1199 -- Sodding your lawn; conservative lawn watering; food labeling update; the cookout lookout; vacation frauds. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. consumer features.)

AGRITAPE #1706 -- USDA news highlights; tobacco assessment; slow beef expansion; grasshopper invasion; dead chicken disposal. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1318 -- Amorous wasps plague NASA; boron & brain waves; wheat & salty soils; bargain biotechnology; film coating for fruit. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Fri., May 19, U.S. ag outlook; Mon., May 21, wheat outlook, U.S. trade update, catfish; Tues., May 22, weekly weather & crop update; Wed., May 23, ag income & finance outlook; Thurs., May 24, feed outlook.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

(May 3, 1990)

FEATURES -- Pat O'Leary reports on a LISA collection at the National Ag Library; Chris Larson on groundbreaking for a national soil conservation center; Lisa Telder has the story on MSU's equine performance center & Joe Courson reports on a Georgia farmer who took a different swing at farming.

ACTUALITIES -- Highlights of Sec. Clayton Yeutter's speech at the American Farm Bureau Federation's National Affairs Convention; Norton Strommen on moisture conditions in the Corn Belt & Delta states; Janet Livezey on rice production; Norman Kallemeyn on trade with Taiwan; Steve Yoder on trade with East Germany.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- EPA's ag advisor; deadly lawns; Georgia chicken wings & safe handling of pesticides.

Available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D
MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFFMIKE

GRASSHOPPER...infestations are expected to be heavy in sections of the upper Midwest this year, says Dean Thurow (KCJB, Minot, N.D.) Dean says numbers in the state's eastern section are likely to be highest since the 1930's. Farmers are checking their fields frequently and reporting the count per square yard. Cold fronts are bodacious in North Dakota. Dean says a recent 70 degree overnight drop put temperatures in the mid-20s, further stressing moisture-deficient crops.

MILLIONS OF ACRES...of rangeland in south central California are reported in bad shape, and a million acres of irrigated cropland are undergoing a 50 percent reduction in water delivery because of drought, says State Conservationist Pearlie Reed. Outlook is not good. California rain season is about ended.

DROUGHT...is definitely broken in southeast Missouri. Jeff Wheeler (KBOA/KTMO, Kennett) says the region's rainfall totals nine inches above average. Cotton planting is behind schedule.

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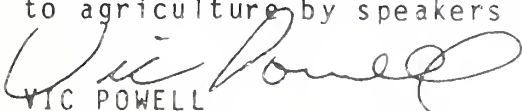
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SERIES OF STORMS...in late April greatly helped to improve planting conditions, says James Stewart (KFYO, Lubbock, Texas). Temperatures of 40 degrees and 30 mph winds sent wind-chill figures into the teens, but Jim says that will help dry the surface so cotton planting can resume. Acreage is expected to be much larger than in recent years. Attitudes are positive.

RFD-TV...programming via satellite from Omaha to rural America and to cable systems made its final telecast last month.

COPIES...of USDA's TV videotape "America's Most Crucial Industry" have been ordered by Robin Kinney (Linder Farm Network, Wilmar, Minn.). She viewed the 15-minute tape with editors in Minneapolis, taking agriculture's message to these media representatives. Mike Rogers (Michigan Farm Bureau) ordered 200 copies to be used as an introduction to agriculture by speakers to non-farm audiences.


VIC POWELL

Chief, Radio & TV Division